

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9618

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 8749

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

REF: NEW DELHI 8748

1. INDIAN AMBASSADOR KAUL WILL BE IN WASHINGTON IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND I AM SURE HE WILL BE KNOCKING AT YOUR DOOR PROMPTLY TO TRY TO PIN DOWN THE TIMING OF BOTH FONMIN CHAVAN'S MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO INDIA.

2. I THINK THIS MAY BE THE TIME TO BEGIN GENTLY TO GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS THAT IT IS FAR FROM CERTAIN THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL BE ABLE TO VISIT SOUTH ASIA THIS FALL, IF THE PRESIDENT AGREES. I AM NOT SURE HOW THE CURRENT INDIAN CRISIS IS LIKELY TO WORK ITSELF OUT, BUT I STRONGLY SUSPECT IT WILL BE WITH US FOR MOST OF THE REST OF THE YEAR. PARTICULARLY IF THE INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM CONTINUES TO SWING UNDER MRS. GANDHI IN AN INCREASINGLY AUTHORITARIAN DIRECTION, I THINK IT WOULD BE UNWISE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO MAKE A STATE VISIT HERE THIS YEAR.

3. I REALIZE THAT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS MAY GOVERN THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION ABOUT VISITS TO OTHER STATES IN THIS AREA. NEVERTHELESS, WE STILL DO HAVE AN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND I AM SERIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT A VISIT TO OTHER STATES BUT NOT INDIA WOULD BE READ AS A POINT-BLANK AFFRONT TO THE

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GOI AND MRS. GANDHI WHICH WOULD TAKE A LONG TIME TO WEAR OFF. I

HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT IF A DECISION IS MADE NOT TO VISIT INDIA
THIS YEAR, THAT THIS BE TENDED TO THE WHOLE SOUTH ASIAN AREA.

4. SO FAR AS THE TIMING OF YOUR MEETING WITH FONMIN CHAVAN IS
CONCERNED, WE ARE RECOMMENDING IN A SEPTEL THAT YOU BE GENERALLY
RECEPTIVE TO A MEETING IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS BUT DEFER GIVING
A SPECIFIC DATE FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.
SAXBE

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